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A party of German engineers visited the Soviet Union in March and April 1954 at the invitation of the Soviet Government. (The invitation actually was an order).

1. The party numbered six, of whom four were engineers, one an interpreter from a storage battery works, and one a woman. None of the others knew why she was going to the USSR. She spoke bad German. The date of the trip was changed several times and then suddenly fixed for 28 Feb 54. For baggage, only an extra suit, an extra pair of shoes and eight sets of underwear were allowed to be taken. Toilet articles were supplied. Baggage had to be delivered at the plant 24 hours before departure. From there it was taken by passenger car to the Schönefeld Airport.
2. The members of the party were not informed of their destination until just before departure; then it was merely announced as Moscow. Departure was fixed for 11 a. m. on 28 Feb 54. At 9 a. m. the party was driven in a Soviet passenger car from the plant to the runway at Schönefeld. Here, each was given a Soviet passport. The plane started at 1 p. m. and Leningrad was announced as its destination. The plane landed at Königsberg (Kaliningrad) at 4 p. m. It was to have taken off for Leningrad at 5:30 p. m. but waited, apparently for a mail transport that did not arrive until 8 a. m. on the morning of 1 Mar 54. Sealed leather bags were unloaded and brought to the plane. Quarters for the night were in a good, warm room which apparently was used by airplane crews. It was neat and the bed covers were white.

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3. The airfield lies east of the city and appears to be a military airport. It has three runways. The one from which the plane took off was about 2.8 km. long, of concrete construction. The only planes seen were 2 two-engined transport planes, parked. There are altogether eight newly-built hangars at the field, each with a frontage of 60 to 80 meters. Both these and the administration building are built of concrete. The administration building appears to be deeply cellared, to judge by the elevators. The airport administrative offices probably are in the basement, because numerous officers came out of the elevators. Not far from the airfield, to the north, there is a barracks apparently, from which marching songs and commands were heard. The airport does not have its own radar installation. At the end of the runway there stood a car about 12 meters long with a rotational radar antenna.
4. A large passenger car was waiting at Leningrad which took the engineers and the interpreter on a slow trip through the city to an Intourist Hotel near the main railway station. During the entire stay in this hotel, only service personnel were observed, but no other guests. At 11 a. m. on 2 Mar 54 the engineers and interpreter were driven in the same passenger car to the university. Here all the institutes were briefly inspected and a meeting was arranged of German and French students (including two negroes). The German students from the East Zone reported about their studies and the hospitality of the Soviet Union. These students came from the universities of Halle, Leipzig and Greifswald. After the German students had finished their talks, one of the engineers was called on to report on the war preparations in West Germany and the threat to France from Germany, and also on the peaceful reconstruction in the DDR. The subsequent discussion lasted until late in the evening.
5. The next morning 3 Mar 54 the Kirov works were visited. Here again receptions were arranged in which Soviet workers expressed their satisfaction with the government. The Kirov works comprise about 25 shops, four of which were shown to the German engineers, mainly the lathe and drilling departments. To all appearances the chief manufactures here are generators and turbines. The shop equipment was modern throughout. The machines themselves were, in large part, of Soviet make. The work organization was surprisingly good. The machines ran without stop, even during the changing of shifts. The large number of women employed was a striking feature. The works has its own power plant, located underground. The shops are mostly constructed of a steel framework covered partly with brick and partly with cement slabs. According to Soviet information a shop of this kind can be built inside of two months. A sports school and various clubhouses were also visited. The inspection was invariably made in the company of Soviet officials.
6. The journey to Moscow on 8 Mar 54 was by the "Red Arrow" express train. The sleeping car occupied by the German engineers and a Soviet engineer was otherwise used only by the train personnel. During the journey the Soviet engineer explained to the Germans the purpose of their trip to Moscow. It was for an exchange of experience with Soviet experts.
7. In Moscow the group was driven by car to the neighborhood of the botanical gardens, to a construction site. Excavation work was going on here, said to be for the metro (subway). The engineers and interpreter were quartered in a two-story house, apparently reserved for such uses. The house also contained two drafting offices, and a chemical laboratory in the cellar. For about a week conferences took place with Soviet engineers over the construction of acid-poor storage batteries of light weight. In the course of the conversations it was indicated that the Soviet was interested in an employment contract with the German engineers.

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8. On 24 Mar 54 the party left Moscow for the neighborhood of Borodino. About 20 km. before Borodino there is a large storage battery works, which consists, at the present time, of six large shops some barracks and two storehouses for materials. Further construction is to be done in the spring. The existing works are constructed exactly after the plan of the former Varta works in Berlin-Oberschöneweide. An outstanding feature is the large research laboratory attached. The equipment is almost entirely of English origin. At the time of the visit, a new acid pump had been assembled which likewise was manufactured in England. Punches and shaping presses came from the East Zone and were of the same kind as in the Berlin works. From inspection it appeared that there was no sparing of material. Here also, mainly women were employed.

9. The electroplating department is still in construction and not ready to operate. It was the German engineers' task to work out scientific and economic methods for this department.

10. The manufacture of magnetic plugs from acid-proof plastic was new. At the present time storage batteries for 24 volts and 150 ampere-hours are manufactured almost exclusively. They apparently are a further development of the smaller types manufactured in the Varta works. Whether they actually represent such a development is a question, because the plant has no professed experts. A storage battery of French manufacture in almost the same design was seen in the research laboratory. It bore the inscription "Andyar". These storage batteries allegedly are used for research and comparison tests.

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11. The plant at present employs about 800 hands. The number will be increased considerably by next autumn, because the plant will have an equipment works attached. A large chemical laboratory is also under construction. Administratively, the plant is attached to the Molotov works.

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13. Three of the engineers accepted working contracts for two years, commencing on 1 Jun 54. The return journey was by rail via Smolensk and Warsaw.

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